

August 4, 2003

Federal Communication Commission  
C/O Commission Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW, CY-B402  
Washington, DC 20554

FCC Proceeding: Docket No. 03-167

Dear Commissioners:

My office is responsible for seeking and securing economic development opportunities for Fayette County. Our central location, access to excellent interstate and rail transportation, affordability, and proximity to larger metro markets including Cincinnati, Dayton, Springfield, and Columbus make Fayette County a very desirable location.

Despite being primarily a rural area, Fayette County has access to the most sophisticated telecommunications technology available today. SBC provides local service to the vast majority of Fayette County with the exception of the Mount Sterling exchange in the northeast corner and the exchanges in the southern edge of the County. SBC has made significant investments in fiber optic technology and digital switching, especially in Washington Court House.

In the economic development arena, telecommunications infrastructure is an extremely important consideration. Decisions to locate in a particular area can often hinge on one or two distinguishing factors. Because the competition is so intense, even minor advantages can mean the difference between landing and losing the prospective business.

SBC is not permitted to be a full-service telecommunications provider in Ohio because the company is not allowed to provide long distance services. Local telephone companies in 45 states now have permission to offer long distance services. These states now benefit from some of the most competitive telecommunications services and prices available in the world. We would like to see Ohio receive the same benefits. Granting SBC permission to offer long distance services will benefit the companies that are already here and bring us on par with our competing states.

Sincerely,  
Jamie Gentry, Director Fayette County Economic Development